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Steve Hamerdinger, Editor

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Signs of Mental Health

DEAF SERVICES CONTINUES TO EXPAND TO MEET *BAILEY*

Regional Coordinators Sought

Deaf Services announced plans to open Montgomery and Huntsville regional offices after January 1st. This will bring Deaf Services to the four regional offices required under the *Bailey* agreement. This was achieved in spite of the precarious budgetary climate in the state and is a tribute to the commitment of the leadership at DMHMR.

The Mobile regional office is also vacant and will be filled in the same time frame.

Recruitment Underway

With the vacancy on Mobile, officials are scrambling to find qualified people to fill three positions. There is a national search now underway for people who can help build quality mental health services.

The *Bailey* settlement calls for four regional coordinators across the state. This will divide the state in regions with several service areas in each region.

Regional Coordinators will be responsible for case management, program development, training providers and outreach to the Deaf Community. ✍

MHIT PROGRAM A SUCCESS

The Mental Health Interpreter Training was held over two weekends in September. Twenty interpreters completed the rigorous course taught by nationally recognized experts in mental health and deafness.



First MHIT Class Completes Training

The training is designed to help interpreters meet the standards set forth in the Code of Alabama, Chapter 580-3-24. This was the culmination of nearly a year of planning and development.

World-renowned mental health and deafness expert Robert Pollard, Ph.D., who has authored hundreds of articles in this area, led the faculty which included nationally known experts such as Dr. Ronald Lybarger (Substance Abuse), Roger Williams (Mental Health interpreting), and Alabama's own, Steve Hamerdinger (mental health systems and services).

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We See What You Are Saying

B'HAM REGION TO OPEN FREE-STANDING OFFICE

By Shannon Reese



The vision of having an office for Deaf Services in Birmingham has been fulfilled! The new office is just down the hill from

the main office of JBS Mental Health Authority. Currently there are three people working in this office and there are plans to expand the program as the year goes on. This will provide more accessibility to the community seeking our help and the staff here all sign. The Office will provide clinical services, case management, and interpreting for mental health settings. Staff also does advocacy work to ensure that all people with hearing loss receive access to culturally and linguistically appropriate services in mental health.

Dr. Richard Craig, executive director of JBSMHA, and his staff deserve recognition for making this possible. They have been instrumental in creating a "deaf-friendly place" for the staff and our consumers. He is planning additions to deaf services such as an all deaf group home for individuals who have special challenges to reintegrating into the community and a duplex for higher functioning consumers to live more independently.

The Deaf Community, who have fought for mental health services here in the state of Alabama, are also to be applauded for their efforts. The establishment of this new office is one of the many results of their effort.

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*Deaf Services Region II Office in Birmingham
at the Oakmont 956 Montclair Road*

As I See It....

The release of the National Association of the Deaf position paper on mental health and deafness (see page 4) is welcome for several reasons. First, it continues the high level of focus on mental health and deafness at the national level that has been going on for the past couple of years. This period began with a national meeting of Cultural Competency and Deaf Services Coordinators under the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors that lead to publication of two groundbreaking reports on mental health services to deaf people. The most recent activity was a national consumer forum under the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill in which the deaf community was specifically asked to help prepare a response to the President's New Freedom Initiative Report. I have been privileged to be part of these initiatives. It thrills me to see that, finally, the mental health needs of deaf people are being recognized at the national policy level.

The second reason is that this paper shows that Alabama has come a long way in a short time. Based on the NAD position paper, we have accomplished about 75% of what the nation's premiere organization of deaf people think is needed for culturally and linguistically appropriate services. Of course that last quarter is always the hardest.

Clearly we are not there yet, but we are way ahead of most of the rest of the country. Commissioner Sawyer gave the Office of Deaf Services a charge to develop the best services for the deaf anywhere. It's a challenge and a promise to Deaf Alabamians.

As I see it, "we've come a long way, baby" - but we have a long way to go.

NAD RELEASES POSITION STATEMENT ON MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

SILVER SPRING, MD - NAD President Andrew J. Lange announced that the National Association of the Deaf has released a new position statement on Mental Health Services for People Who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

"This is a critical issue and the NAD is committed to improving mental health care service delivery systems for deaf and hard of hearing individuals. The Board is grateful to all those who worked hard to develop this statement, particularly Randall R. Myers, Ph.D., LCSW-C, chair of the NAD Mental Health Committee," stated Lange.

Highlights of the statement (which can be found at www.nad.org) include:

- An expectation that services for deaf and hard of hearing individuals be equal in quality and effectiveness to those provided to persons who are able to hear;
- An expectation that service providers be able to communicate directly with deaf and hard of hearing individuals and be aware of and sensitive to the cultural and linguistic factors of such individuals;
- An expectation that service providers understand the psychosocial impact hearing loss has on these individuals;
- The position that appropriate use of services and adaptive technology may be needed




and is best identified and utilized by the consumer and his/her family members, including qualified and certified interpreters, assistive listening devices and real-time captioning services and tele-mental health care technology;

- A list of recommended state actions including the establishment of an advisory committee, the provision of a continuum of services, and the involvement of deaf and hard of hearing consumers and their families in the decision making process.

"We will be sharing this position paper with mental health providers, consumers, and advocates throughout the country. The NAD is committed to working with mental health systems and service providers to meet the needs of deaf and hard of hearing individuals," commented Myers.

The statement was produced by the NAD Mental Health Committee in coordination with State Directors of Mental Health and NAD staff.

"This position paper is another step in ongoing efforts of the NAD to promote equal opportunity for full participation in society for each and every deaf and hard of hearing individual." 


MHIT Program A Success

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MHIT was held over the weekends of September 5-7 and 12-14. Various venues were used in order to broaden interpreters' exposure to different settings in which mental health services are delivered. The settings included DMHMR Central Office and Greil Hospital in Montgomery, Taylor Hardin Secure Medical Center in Tuscaloosa, J-B-S Mental Health Authority in Birmingham, and the Montgomery Mental Health Authority.

The course is designed to increase working interpreters' knowledge of special skills needed to be successful in mental health interpreting. Each session taught specific skills and competencies that Alabama expects interpreters to know and master if they are to be considered *qualified* mental health interpreters. (See "MHIT At a Glance on page 6.)

Associate Commissioner for Mental Illness, Kim Ingram, expressed her thanks to the MHIT staff. "I have received notes from many of the participants of the training and they were all praising it."

With the unqualified success of this year's program, MHIT Coordinator, Charlene Crump, announced that funding for training in 2004 has been approved and an announcement of training dates should be made in the next few weeks. 

BIRMINGHAM REGION TO OPEN FREE-STANDING OFFICE

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New contact information:

JBS Deaf Services Office
956 Montclair Road, Suite 108
Birmingham, AL 35213
205-591-2212 (Voice) 205-591-2216 (TTY)
205-591-2214 (FAX)
Email: sreese@jbsmha.com
www.jbsmha.com



FOCUS ON THE STAFF

SHANNON REESE



Hi y'all! It is a pleasure to be the new Regional Coordinator of Deaf Services for Region II (Birmingham, Tuscaloosa, and Talladega). I look forward to meeting everyone here...hopefully very soon!

I grew up in Atlanta, Georgia with hearing parents and two older brothers, one of whom is deaf. After graduating from high school, I attended Gardner-Webb University in Boiling Springs, NC, for a year. Then I transferred to the University of Georgia, where I obtained my BA in psychology. Before starting my graduate studies at Gallaudet University, I did a short stint as a one-on-one attendant at the Tennessee School for the Deaf. At Gallaudet, I began my graduate studies in the Mental Health Counseling program. My practicum was at the Springfield Hospital Center, Maryland, working in the Deaf Unit, and my internship was at the Seattle Mental Health Institute in Washington State. Having successfully completed all the requirements, I was awarded a MA in Mental Health Counseling in May of 2000.

After receiving my degree, opportunity knocked on my door and convinced me to work in Massachusetts as assistant director for a Gallaudet Regional Center. After a year in Massachusetts (and the snow and ice!), I moved back south. Another unique opportunity then came my way to work in South Carolina and North Carolina...as a trainer and curriculum developer for sexual abuse prevention and education for deaf and hard of hearing children. Now, once again, another fantastic opportunity has allowed me to join the statewide effort to improve mental health services for deaf people here in Alabama. I am delighted and thrilled to be part of this groundbreaking effort! And...if any of you want to contact me, feel free to do so! I welcome any feedback, inquiries or...just drop by to visit!

BIRMINGHAM REGIONAL OFFICE ANNOUNCES OPEN HOUSE

Regional Coordinator, Shannon Reese, cordially invites you to attend the **open house** at the new office on

**Wednesday, January 21
from 2 – 5 PM.**

The office is located in the Oakmont Building at 956 Montclair Road, just east of Baptist Montclair Hospital.

GREIL IN-PATIENT UNIT OPENING PUSHED BACK

The much anticipated opening of the Deaf in-patient unit at Greil Psychiatric Hospital in Montgomery suffered a setback when architectural survey indicated a number of serious problems that had to be fixed before the unit could open. Numerous major code issues were discovered. Additionally, asbestos was found which required yet another contract to be drafted and bid out.



ODS Director Steve Hamerdinger reviews architectural drawings with Andy Burrell of Gould Turner Group

In spite of the delays, officials at DMHMR are committed to getting this open during the 04 fiscal year. We are hopeful that we can begin hiring in the early summer with the doors actually open no later than August.

The unit, which is slated to have 10 beds, will be designed to treat deaf people with co-occurring substance abuse and mental illness in a culturally affirmative environment. It is thought to be unique in the country and will complete the continuum of services to be set up in Alabama for deaf people with mental illness.

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SERVING DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING CONSUMERS WHO DON'T SIGN

An Alternative Approach


By Steve Hamerdinger

The Office of Deaf Services often finds consumers who are deaf or have a severe hearing loss, but for one reason or another do not sign. These consumers are doubly challenging to serve because of the communication barrier created by lack of an effective and efficient input channel. Some of these consumers do, however, have the ability to read and this creates a possible avenue for accommodation. Computer assisted real time captioning (CART) is emerging as an efficient way of serving people with hearing loss who have reasonable reading skills.

CART has been defined as "the instantaneous translation of the spoken word into English text using a stenotype machine, notebook computer and realtime software and displaying the text on a laptop computer, monitor or screen." (from <http://www.cartprovider.net/CART.html>)

CART has the advantage of being faster than writing or even typing, which allows for more natural and complete flow of information. CART can be used to great effect in meetings and psychoeducational settings. Further, CART can be provided remotely, meaning that it is not necessary that the CART writer actually be physically at the meeting. A phone hook-up and access to the internet are all that is needed.

Even more exciting, CART benefits many people other than those who are traditionally thought of as deaf or hard of hearing. People with central auditory processing problems are often able to make use of CART. Not to mention many of us are getting older and we find that people do not talk loud as they used to. CART makes it easier for people to understand in large auditorium settings.

The Office of Deaf Services will be experimenting with CART in the months ahead, especially for consumers who are late-deafened and do not benefit from traditional interpreter services. Look for us to provide this service at conferences around the state. 

OFFICE OF DEAF SERVICES UNVEILS NEW WEB SITE

The Office of Deaf Services working with DMHMR Data Management Office has unveiled a new website. DMHMR Webmaster, T.J. Jay has been working hard to get important and timely information about ODS and Deaf Services policies posted so consumers and providers can have up to date information.

The new web site can be found at <http://www.mh.state.al.us/services/mi/DeafServices>

You will find documents related to services available through the office as well as information about standards of care for deaf people with mental illness. ODS Director, Steve Hamerdinger, remarked that this is a work in progress and that we will eventually have some of the most cutting edge information available there.



**DEAF SERVICES
REGIONAL CENTERS**

ODS Regional Offices

Region 1: Northern Alabama

Huntsville-Madison
Mental Health Center
4040 South Memorial Pkwy
Huntsville, AL 35802
(256) 533-1970

Region 2: Central Alabama

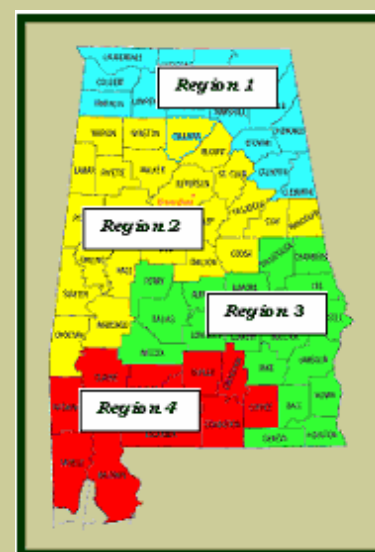
Shannon Reese, Coordinator
J-B-S Mental Health Center
956 Montclair Road, Suite 108
Birmingham, AL 35213
205-591-2212 (Voice)
205-591-2216 (TTY)
205-591-2214 (FAX)

Region 3: Wiregrass Region

Montgomery Mental Health
Authority
101 Coliseum Boulevard
Montgomery, AL 36109
(334) 279-7830

Region 4: Mobile

Mobile Mental Health
2400 Gordon Smith Drive
Mobile, AL 36617
(251) 450-5901



2003 Alabama Mental Health Interpreter Training At a Glance

Vital Statistics

- The first mental health interpreter training was held over 6 days during the period 5 – 14 September. Training was held at five venues : Central Office, Greil Hospital, Montgomery Mental Health Authority, Taylor Hardin Secure Medical, and J-B-S Mental Health Authority
- The training consisted of a total of 40 hours of actual classroom time.
- Twenty-four interpreters met the stringent screening criteria, and 20 completed the course of study.
- Support for the training came from:
 - ALDMH/MR Divisions of MI and SA
 - Alabama Chapter of the American Sign Language Teachers Association
 - Gallaudet University Regional Center
 - South East Regional Interpreter Training Consortium

Partial Course List

- | | |
|---|--|
| • <i>Introduction to Mental Health Systems</i>
Steve Hamerdinger | • <i>Treatment Approaches in Substance Abuse</i>
Dr. Ron Lybarger |
| • <i>Introduction to Mental Illness</i>
Dr. Robert Pollard | • <i>Role Playing Addictions Groups</i>
Dr. Ron Lybarger |
| • <i>Psych-Social Implications of Deafness</i>
Dr. Robert Pollard | • <i>Introduction to Forensic Services</i>
Jim Reddoch |
| • <i>Introduction to Psychology and Psychiatry and Treatment Approaches</i>
Dr. Robert Pollard | • <i>Linguistic and Cultural Equivalence</i>
Dr. Jeffery Davis |
| • <i>Assessment, Diagnosis and Testing</i>
Dr. Robert Pollard | • <i>Sources of Communication Impairment</i>
Roger Williams, LCSW |
| • <i>Concepts of Normalcy</i>
Dr. Robert Pollard | • <i>Techniques for Dealing With Dysfluent Language</i>
Roger Williams, LCSW |
| • <i>Addiction Theory</i>
Dr. Ron Lybarger | • <i>Collegiality, Conferencing And Professional Conduct</i>
Roger Williams, LCSW |